

Common Sales Mistakes Companies Need to Correct Before the Q4 Push

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As the start of fourth quarter looms on the horizon, many companies are looking at their numbers and increasing the pressure on sales teams to make up for losses earlier in the year. While every company has unique circumstances affecting its sales cycle, there are common threads that can be identified across the majority of organizations in terms of errors that directly correlate to sales losses.

One of the major contributors to missed sales opportunities is slow response time to incoming leads. Many companies use automated email replies to notify a customer their message was received. However, these messages should not be relied on to buy additional time before an actual response to a lead's questions is generated. Failing to be the first company to respond to a customer can mean losing that business.

Equally as important as responding to leads in a timely manner is nurturing those leads. Determining the proper amount of lead nurturing is part of the optimization process for any sales funnel, but the fact remains; companies that reach a customer first and then nurture that lead are more likely to close a sale.

Now, nurturing is not a task that should simply be relegated to a mindless, repetitive email blast. Personalizing nurturing campaigns does not mean that the process cannot be automated. Sales automation tools have advanced to meet the needs of the modern sales professional, offering customization, efficiency, and company-compliant messages.

It is also important to note that email is not the only tool businesses have at their disposal for lead follow ups. Social media or SMS campaigns can be a more effective nurturing strategy than email in certain situations. For example, social media provides businesses with a unique opportunity to create one-on-one relationships between their sales people and leads. Text messaging has also been proven to be a valuable sales tool.

Companies looking to increase their sales in the fourth quarter to make up for lost ground earlier in the year need to start with their sales process. Management needs to ensure that sales teams are provided with the tools they need to respond to leads quickly, to nurture leads once they are in the system and to reach leads through every possible channel. Failure to adjust now will result in a year-end sales report that is lackluster and another year of missed quotas.

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